



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913

PH (517) 373.1707 | FAX (517) 373.3935

www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/toy/

For Immediate Release
February 21, 2006

Contact: Heather Lombardini
(517) 373-1707

Sen. Laura Toy welcomes WXYZ Channel 7 News Anchor Diana Lewis to Capitol to discuss importance of organ donation

LANSING – In remarks to the Michigan Senate today, WXYZ TV News anchor Diana Lewis stressed the importance of becoming an organ and tissue donor. The Channel 7 veteran was the guest of state Sen. Laura M. Toy, R-Livonia.

“It is an honor for me to stand before you this morning,” Lewis said. “I have had the joy of working as a journalist in television news for nearly 40 years. My career has afforded me an opportunity to meet some amazing people and cover some overwhelming events like Super Bowl 40. But I tell you this morning, addressing the Michigan State Senate, this is a first for me and I am truly humbled.”

Lewis recounted the story of two friends, one black and one white, who were the recipient and donor of a life-saving kidney. Omie Smith, the kidney recipient, joined Toy and Lewis in front of the Senate.

“Theirs is a story of charity, friendship, and life,” Lewis told the Senate. “Life made possible because of the Gift of Life Organ Donation Program. They are living proof that our differences are truly only skin deep.”

Toy and Lewis met last year when they both received awards from the Donate Life Coalition of Michigan for their work to support organ donation in Michigan. Each senator is allowed only one presentation a year, and Toy knew immediately that she wanted to invite Lewis to discuss the importance of organ and tissue donation in the state.

“We hit it off right away,” Sen. Toy said. “You can tell that Diana Lewis is a very sincere person and passionate about what she does. It was my privilege to welcome her to Lansing to address my colleagues from across the state about the need for people to register as organ donors.”

In 2004, Sen. Toy sponsored legislation that established the Michigan Organ and Tissue Donation Education Fund to promote organ donation in Michigan. While the national average organ donor registration level is about 40 percent and the average for Great Lakes states is 39 percent, less than 9 percent of Michigan residents are currently registered.

“Sen. Toy, God bless you and thank you for caring because caring is what it is all about,” concluded Lewis, who is also the honorary chairperson with her daughter Glenda Lewis of the Belle Isle Life Walk, which supports Gift of Life Michigan’s Minority Organ Tissue Transplant Education Program.

For more information, or to sign up to become an organ and tissue donor, visit www.giftoflifemichigan.org or call 1-800-482-4881.

(More)

Editor's note: Photos of Sen. Toy and Diana Lewis are available at:
<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/photowire/Toy/Toy.htm>